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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

March 1994



Vale District Planning Update for the Jordan Resource Area



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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Planning Update

Introduction

The BLM's Management Framework Plan (MFP) Planning Update is designed to provide the public with resource management information, and to assist the public in understanding land management proposals and decisions.

This Vale District Planning Update for the

Jordan Resource Area is the sixth of similar reports summarizing progress towards implementation of the Southern Malheur Resource Area MFP. (Note: The resource area name was changed to Jordan in 1988.)

Specifically, the update identifies work accomplishments for fiscal year 1993 (Oct. 1, 1992 through Sept. 30, 1993), and achievements anticipated for the 1994 fiscal year.

What to Expect in This Document

The Jordan Resource Area MFP Planning Update is an annual publication. While its format may change, major sections like those described below will be included in each edition.

Feature Report: These reports highlight topics of concern or high public interest within the Jordan Resource Area. The articles feature leading accomplishments or upcoming events. This year's report is about the Birch Creek Ranch, located on the National Wild and Scenic Owyhee River.

Summary of Work: The summary section identifies accomplishments for each major resource program for the previous fiscal year (1993).

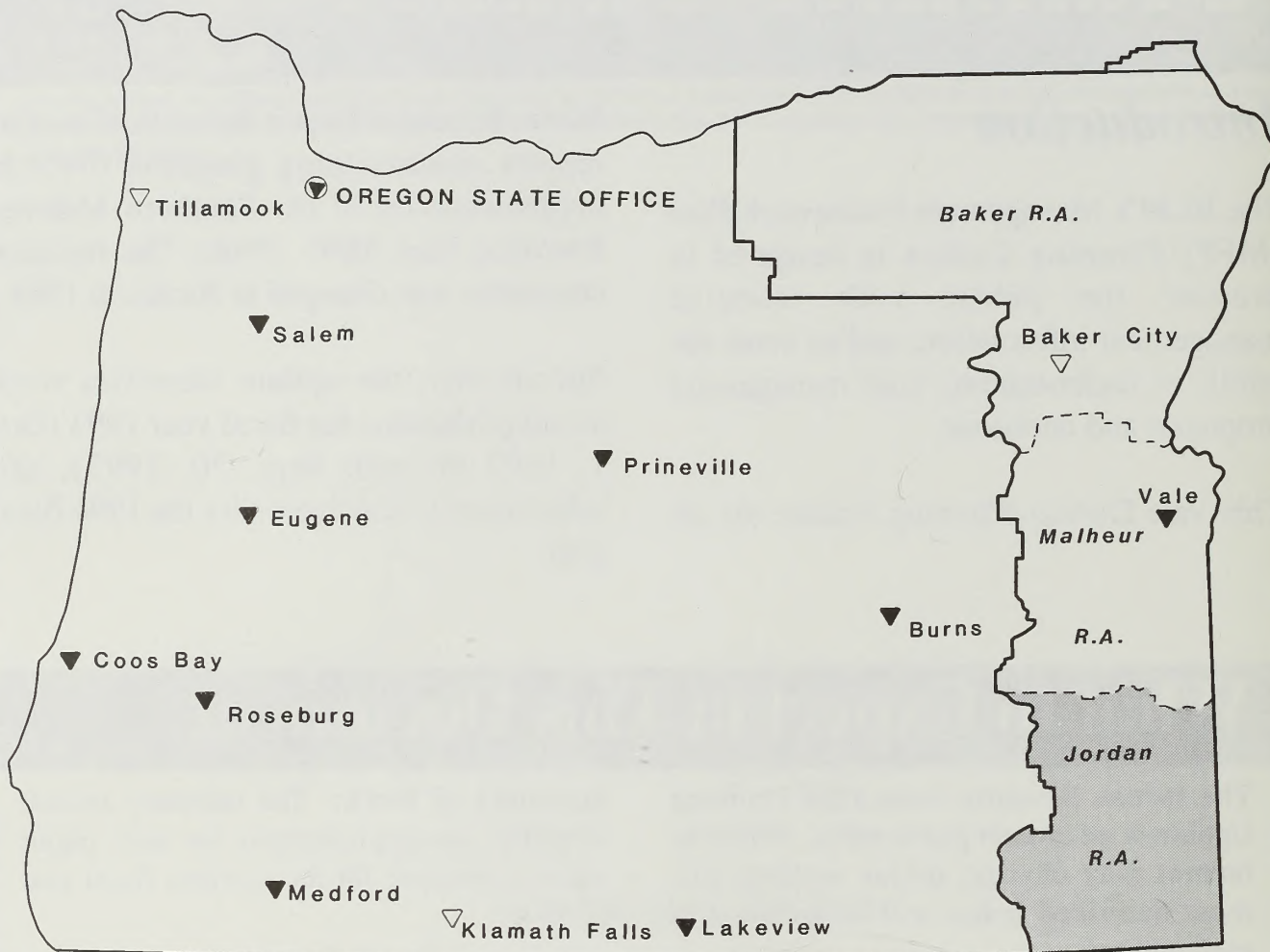
Program Initiatives: This section describes notable projects in major resource programs during the upcoming fiscal year (1994).

Environmental Assessment (EA) Register: The register provides public notification of upcoming actions to facilitate the public in giving input. Included on the register are EAs that may be completed in fiscal year 1994 or succeeding years.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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VALE DISTRICT

GENERAL LOCATION MAP



- BLM State Office
- ▼ BLM District Office
- ▽ BLM Area Office
- District Boundary
- - - Resource Area Boundary

Birch Creek Ranch—

As part of a 1988 land purchase for the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River, the Vale BLM District acquired the Birch Creek and Morrison Ranches, together commonly known as the Birch Creek Ranch. The ranch is located on the Owyhee River, at the end of about 30 miles of an increasingly primitive road.

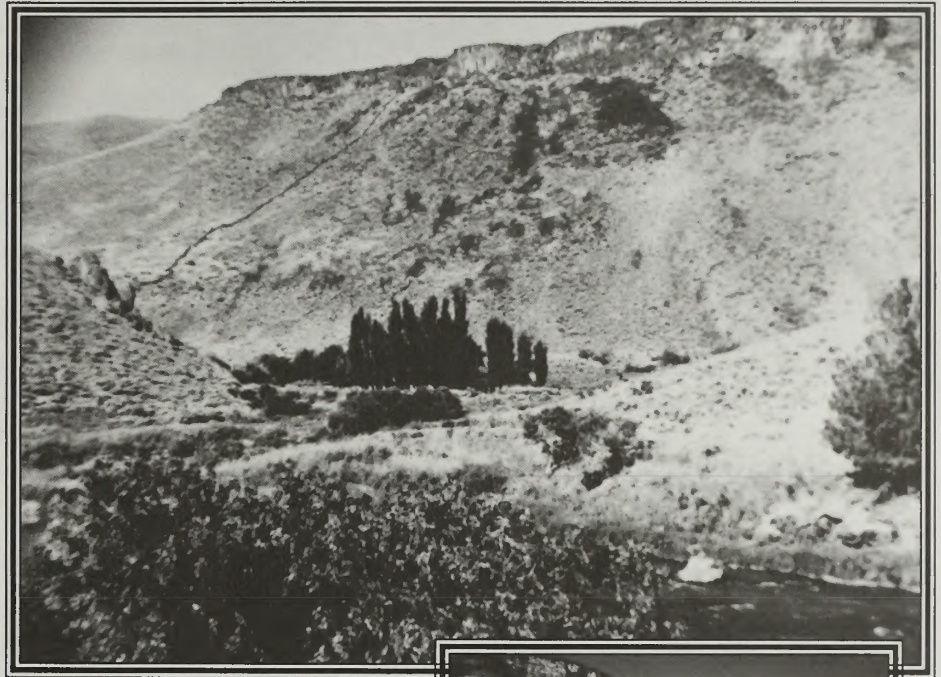
Background

Both ranches have lengthy histories and prominent places in the settlement of southeast Oregon. Around the turn of this century Juan Domingo Lequerica, a Basque, settled on land in the Owyhee River canyon at the mouth of Birch Creek. Within a few years, Lequerica died tragically in a wagon accident, and the Birch Creek Ranch was sold to another Basque family. The ranch remained in Basque ownership until 1937.

Around the same time the Birch Creek Ranch was founded, James Morrison settled about half a mile downstream from Lequerica. With one brief exception, the Morrison Ranch was owned and operated by him until his death in 1962.

Historical Significance of the Birch Creek Ranch

An historian evaluated the Birch Creek Ranch after its BLM acquisition, and found it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an historic landscape with Basque ethnic associations. The BLM has formally nominated the ranch for inclusion on the Register.



1. Birch Creek Ranch Site (note basalt block wall going up Owyhee Canyon wall).



2. Morrison Ranch downriver about half a mile from Birch Creek Ranch.

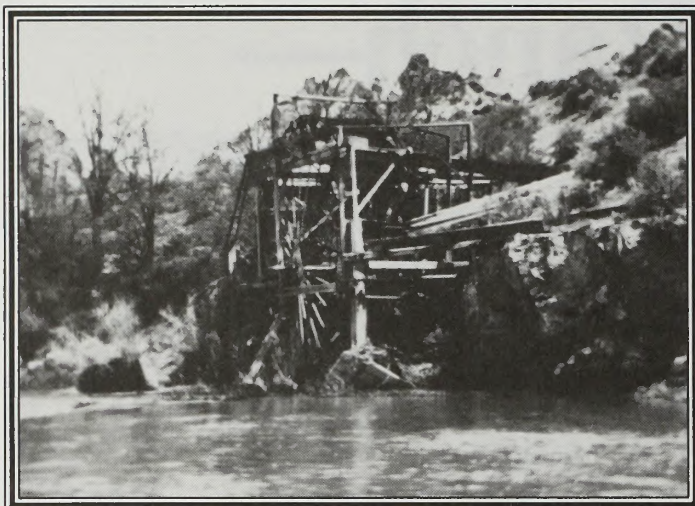


3. Birch Creek Ranch bone yard.

4. Birch Creek Ranch bunk house.

5. Birch Creek Ranch barn.





Morrison waterwheel provided irrigation water for an alfalfa field and fruit trees.

Over the years, the ranch has had some landscape changes as evidenced by several acres of redundant lawn which original settlers would not have planted. Beyond these changes, however, visitors see much of what early settlers saw. The various owners maintained many buildings, corrals, orchards, and stone walls originally built by the Basque people.

One structure of special interest is the Morrison waterwheel which still stands on the Owhyee River. The waterwheel, noted as one of only three remaining waterwheels in Oregon according to the historian's report, probably could be restored to provide water to the irrigated fields.

There has been some reconstruction. The stone block root cellar roof and the ranch corrals were reconstructed this past year by the Birch Creek caretaker, following strict guidelines to maintain the ranch's historic eligibility.

In addition to the routine maintenance, there was some weather-related maintenance necessitated by the record-setting Owyhee River flood in March. The flood caused rock slides and wash-outs which closed the access road to the public for several weeks during the Spring. Floodwaters flowed through two of the out-buildings, reaching the four-foot mark within the structures. While clean-up was extensive, no permanent damage occurred.

Managing the Ranch in the Public Interest

The Birch Creek Ranch is a favorite fishing spot for many people, and also a popular take-out point for Owyhee River float-boaters. In the fall, the ranch serves as a camp site for hunters searching the draws for deer and upland game birds. In the summer and fall, the ranch has many visitors who simply enjoy its beauty and tranquility.

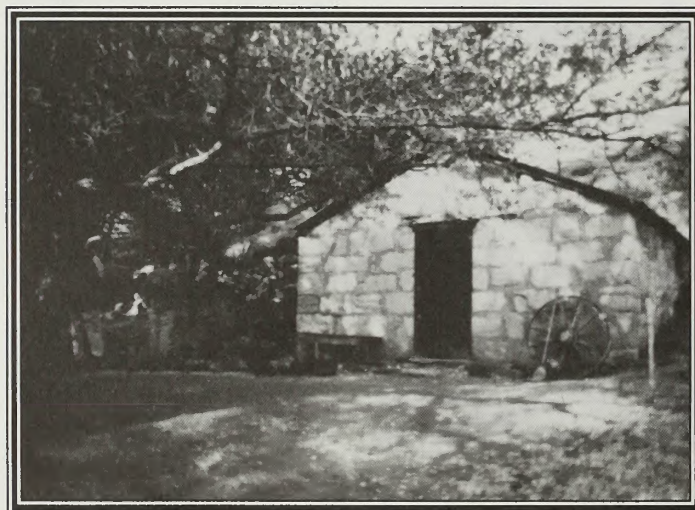
In response to these increasing public uses, the Jordan Resource Area is developing a management plan for Birch Creek to define activities that will be allowed there. The plan will also include guidelines for maintaining the historic nature of the buildings and grounds, and managing for recreation and resource protection. Management will be consistent with the National Register eligibility of Birch Creek Ranch and its location on a wild and scenic river.

Feel welcome to visit the Birch Creek Ranch and to make suggestions for its beneficial use.

Birch Creek Stone Root Cellar.



Approximately 35 percent of the Owyhee River floaters take-off the river at Birch Creek.



Summary of Work

The Preferred Land Use Alternative document (March 14, 1983) for the Northern and Southern Malheur Resource Areas identifies the land use planning decisions for the Jordan Resource Area. The Land Use Alternative also identifies supplemental land use decisions for livestock and wilderness programs as contained in the Rangeland Program Summary and Wilderness EIS, respectively. Identifying all land use planning decisions for the Jordan Resource Area requires review of the 1983 Preferred Land Use Alternative, Southern Malheur Rangeland Program Summary (January 1984), Southern Malheur Grazing Management Program Draft EIS (1983), Final Southern Malheur Grazing Management EIS (September 1983), and the Oregon Wilderness EIS (December 1989).

1993 Program Summary

Cultural Resources

The Cultural Resource Program's 1993 priority was completing work on The-Hole-in-the-Ground Petroglyph Site located in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River corridor. Site recording was completed during the summer, and a draft management plan was also prepared during the year. A second priority, which was also completed, was re-evaluation of the petroglyph sites to check for any degradation. In addition, 23 sites associated with the river were patrolled and monitored.

Public outreach activities during the year included speaking engagements, a newspaper interview, book and poster distribution, and work with grade school children. Work also started on Trails West, a BLM Cultural Heritage initiative.

In-house projects, other than cultural, decreased in 1993. Support work consisted of conducting 30 inventories covering 934 acres. There were 25 previously-unrecorded sites found, but none were adversely affected by BLM construction and management activities that have occurred in their proximity.

The bulk of work and funding for the Cultural Resource Program was devoted to five trespasses involving damage to prehistoric archeological sites. Two trespasses were resolved by restitution and clean-up, and another was resolved by restricting use in the vicinity of the site. It could not be determined who caused the damage at the two other sites; follow-up actions on those two sites were limited to recording the incursions and posting warning signs.

There were other Cultural Resource Program accomplishments at Birch Ranch (see feature article).

Petroglyph rock at The-Hole-in-the-Ground petroglyph site.



Range Management

Emphasis in the range management program during the 1993 grazing season focused on use supervision and monitoring. Although precipitation was above normal for the first time in several years, drought management continued and no work emphasis was given to either allotment evaluation or project implementation.

While the increased precipitation was welcomed for the drought-stricken rangelands, major concern continued for the vulnerability of the key rangeland plants to harm because of their low vigor and poor health. Considerable time was spent ensuring that livestock grazing was in compliance with drought management guidelines developed by the Vale District for the 1993 grazing season.

The guidelines established deferment or rest for all grazing pastures that were heavily impacted by the drought. Pastures that had not suffered severely from the drought conditions were grazed under conservative grazing systems in some cases; in other cases, pastures were grazed under their normal rotation. Although forage was abundant in many allotments as a result of the increased precipitation, no supplemental grazing use was given this year.

Eight "I" (improved) and 22 "M" (maintained) allotments were monitored for utilization and actual use. These represent all "I" and "M" allotments in the resource area. Of those 30 allotments, one "I" and two "M" allotments were monitored for trend and climate in preparation for allotment evaluations during the late winter to early spring of 1994.

While no allotment evaluations were done during the year, two of the eight 1992 allotment evaluations and six of the seven 1991 evaluations were finalized. The seven incomplete evaluations from 1991-92 are undergoing editorial changes and coordination efforts, but are expected to be finalized this year. The unfinalized evaluations are: Saddle Butte (from 1991); and Fifteen-Mile Community, Wroten, Albusu-Alcorta, Echave, Jackies Butte, and Sherburn (all from 1992). The Coyote Lake, Lodge,



Jordan Resource Area crested wheat grass seeding.

Oliver, and West Cow Creek allotment evaluations were finalized in 1993 (see Appendix A of this planning update for their summaries). No permanent adjustments in active preference occurred in 1993.

The light range improvement project work done in 1993 was in the Trout Creek riparian area (see Appendix A). The riparian improvement effort in the Trout Creek area continued to be a major workload specific to the 1993 grazing season. Biological assessments were completed on the McCormick and Zimmerman Allotments in 1993 to assess the impacts of proposed 1993 grazing strategies on Lahontan cutthroat trout. The Fish and Wildlife Service responded with two no jeopardy biological opinions. To ensure compliance with the riparian grazing strategies, use supervision of livestock grazing started in April and lasted until September. No problems were encountered with operator compliance in the Trout Creek area in 1993.

Among other 1993 Range Program accomplishments were several tours in the Trout Creek/Oregon Canyon Mountains. The tours with BLM, ranchers, environmental interests, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W) showed that compliance from the livestock operators is helping to improve the condition of the riparian areas. These improvements are moving the BLM grazing management towards meeting management objectives. One of the findings is that long-term riparian objectives are being obtained with livestock grazing, as long as grazing management strategies are followed.

No allotment management plans (AMP) were completed in 1993 due to the higher priorities described above. Work was done on several AMPs, but none were finalized due to complications in the negotiation process.

Severe drought conditions over the past several years ended in 1993 with above normal precipitation and water in many reservoirs late into the year. Cooler summer temperatures improved livestock distribution throughout the area. In spite of these improved rangeland conditions, on many pastures the effects of the lengthy drought still required resting or deferring grazing use. The cooperation of the livestock operators with BLM's conservative grazing or non-grazing proposals was excellent. Agreement was reached in all cases, precluding the need to issue grazing decisions.

This year's record-setting Owyhee River flow led to higher visitor counts for the Owyhee and also to a record number of floaters. Beginning the first of March and ending the last weekend in June, approximately 2,500 visitors floated the Owyhee. There were 26 commercial outfitters who



▲
Owyhee River floaters staying warm and dry on an early spring trip.

◀
One of the earliest Owyhee river rangers.

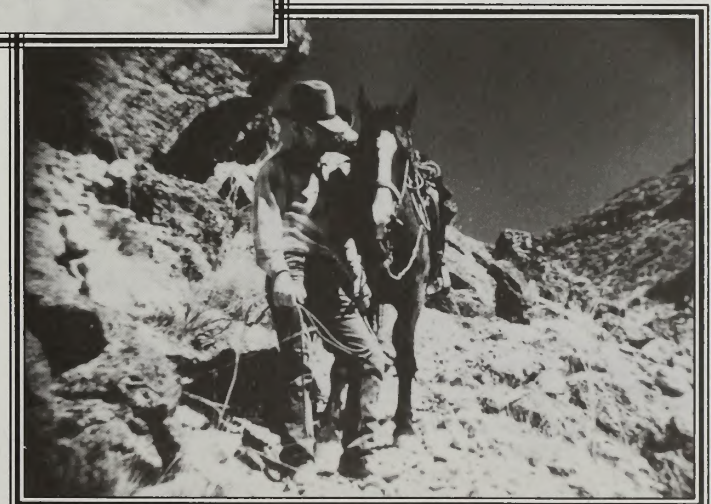
▼
Horseback riding in the Owyhee Canyon can be highly technical.



Recreation

The Main, West Little, and North Fork Owyhee National Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan and Environmental Assessment was completed.

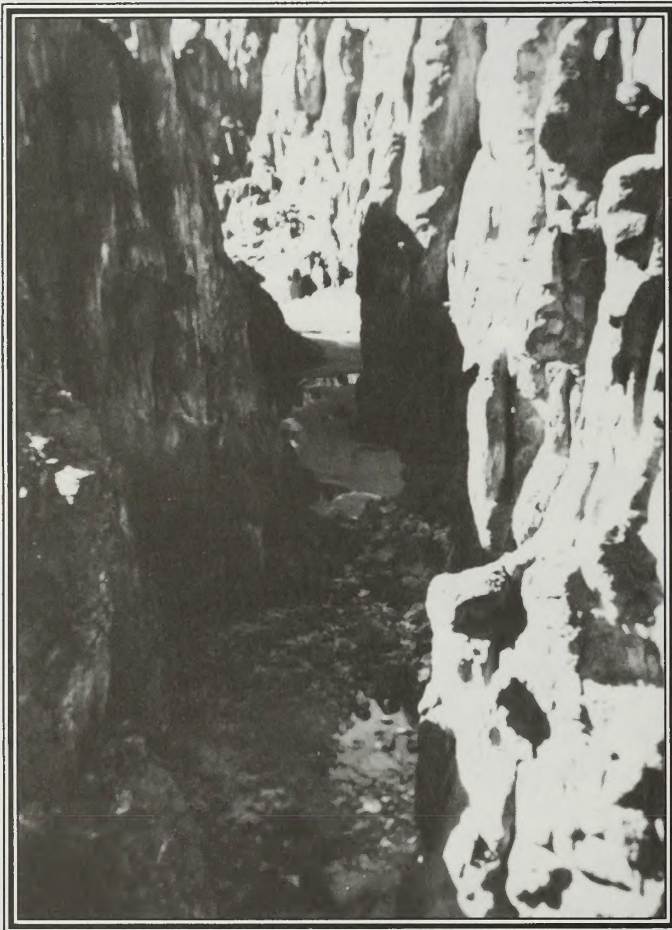
Maintenance and patrol of recreation sites continued in Jordan Resource Area throughout the year. Focus was on those sites with higher use concentrations: Three Forks, Rome, Owyhee Springs, Taylor Grazing Interpretive Site, and Willow Creek Hot Springs. Routine maintenance patrols also occurred at Cow Lakes and Antelope Reservoir Campgrounds.



applied for and received special recreation permits for the Owyhee River, but only 21 of the outfitters used their permits to float the river.

Recreation staff provided floatboat and foot patrols on the upper, middle and lower sections of the Main Owyhee, and on the North Fork Owyhee and West Little Owyhee Rivers. Law enforcement and resource specialists accompanied recreation staff on these patrols, providing visitor service, river clean-up, regulation compliance, resource inventory, monitoring, and protection. Inventory for non-motorized access into the West Little Owyhee Canyon was initiated with 25 percent of the task being completed.

Jordan Resource Area developed information/fact sheets for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and hunting opportunities. The flyers provide visitors with basic information on these recreation opportunities and a "Leave No-Trace" ethic.



The West Little Owyhee Wild and Scenic River corridor is also a wilderness study area.

In addition to the above work, there were several Recreation Program accomplishments specific to the Birch Creek Ranch; those are included in the feature article on the ranch.

Wilderness

The Jordan Resource Area manages approximately one million acres of wilderness study areas (WSA), which is the largest WSA acreage of any BLM resource area in the state. Within these million acres, there are 17 WSAs representing diverse terrains, from lava flows to river canyons, sagebrush-bunchgrass plateaus, and mountain mahogany and aspen groves. Management of these WSAs adheres to the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP).

This interim management includes patrolling all WSAs at least once per month during the field season. Patrols include driving the boundary roads and interior ways by motor vehicle or mountain bike, hiking or horseback riding cross-country, and floating the river by raft or kayak. Several aerial (helicopter) patrols were performed this year. All WSAs in the resource area received at least one aerial patrol this year, while 70 percent received two aerial patrols.

The Owyhee River WSAs (3-110 and 3-195) received the highest recorded floatboat use during the 1993 river season (March through June). Eight river patrols were performed by rafting the three segments of the Main Owyhee River. River staff continued the campsite inventory and monitoring program initiated in 1978. Other inventory and monitoring studies were done for cultural, botany, and wildlife resources.

Information/fact sheets were developed to provide visitors with guidelines for low impact use of wilderness study areas.

Minerals

Mineral activity has increased but still remains small and diverse. Work accomplishments included processing of 3 regular Notices of Intent for mining exploration, 4 small miner exceptions, and 11 surface management inspections. Twelve material sales/free use permits were issued for gravel to various users, including some private individuals, the State of Oregon Highway Department, the Malheur County Road District and Jordan Valley Irrigation Districts. Several 5-year free use permits issued in past years are monitored annually. Two mineral material

trespass cases were worked on during the year. Currently, the resource area has no mineral leasing activity. Work was completed on three flat-rock sales and on mine inspections of community mineral material site pits.

Lands and Rights-of-Way

Realty staff processed one right-of-way and four unauthorized use cases, and issued three 302 agricultural permits. One Vale District public sale of 3.58 acres was completed to resolve an occupancy and underground fuel storage tank trespass.

Three land exchanges proposed for completion in 1993 were delayed until 1994. One exchange is awaiting appraisal and title evidence, and the other two need further analysis of minerals and cultural resource values. One land acquisition of 1,400 acres was made within the Owyhee River Wild and Scenic River corridor.

A recreation public and purpose lease for an existing landfill was renewed for one year, and four quarterly compliance checks were made.

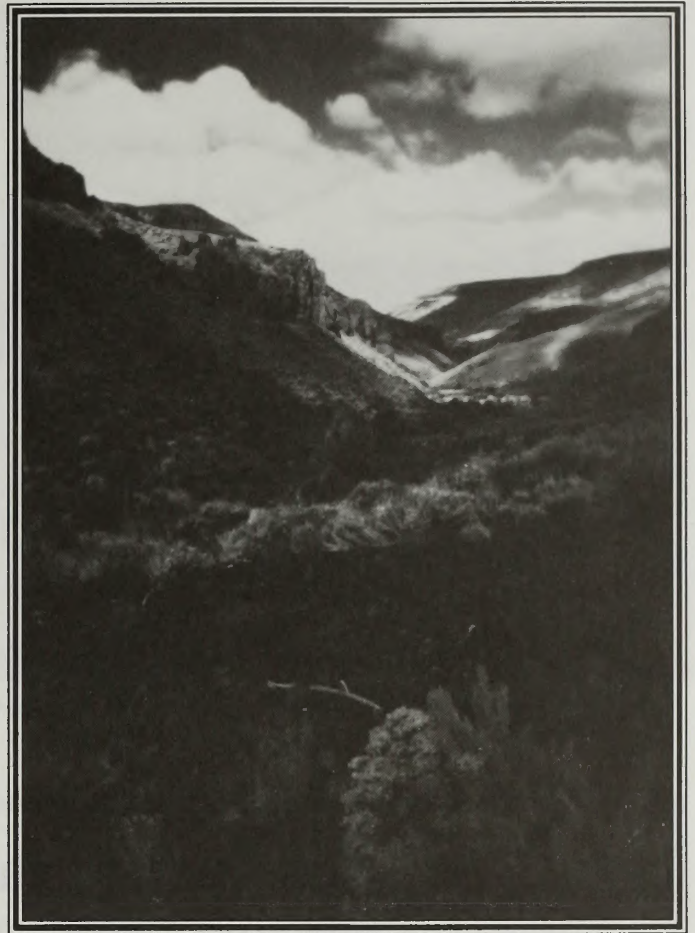
Hazardous Materials

The Hazardous Materials Program assisted the Realty and Minerals Programs in conducting hazardous materials inventories for mine sites and right-of-ways in the Jordan Resource Area. The Hazardous Materials Program developed a computerized data base program to compile and analyze this inventory data. Hazardous materials Level I surveys were conducted on lands of the Quarter Circle Eleven Ranch for the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River and wilderness study area inholding acquisitions.

In compliance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, reports were submitted to the State of Oregon Fire Marshall's Office on materials being stored at the Burns Junction Administrative Site and Birch Creek Ranch.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Four Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are located in the Jordan Resource Area: Owyhee River, Jordan Craters, Saddle Butte Lava Tubes, and Whitehorse



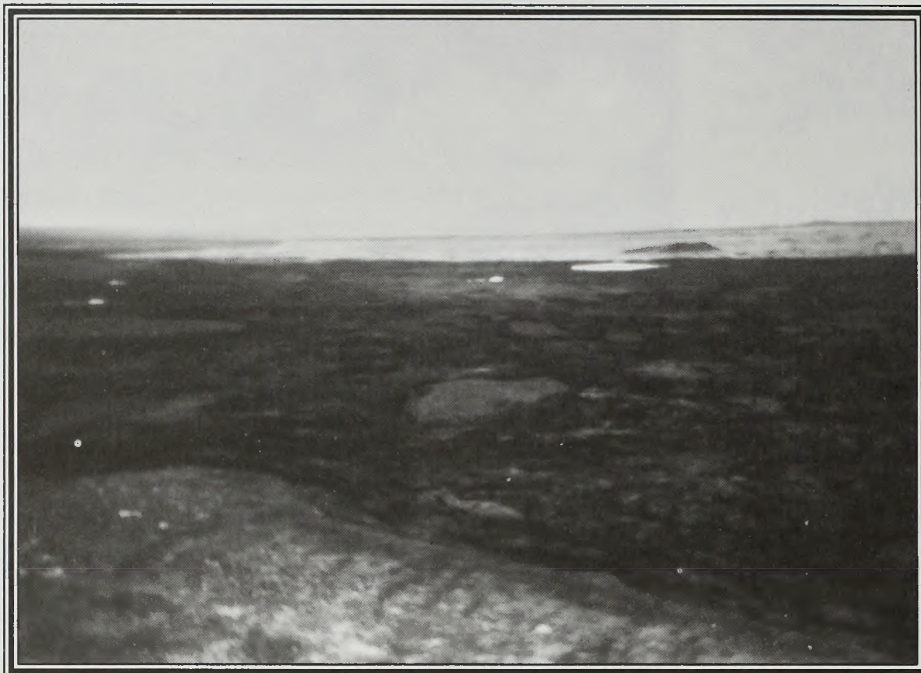
Whitehorse Canyon within the Whitehorse Basin ACEC.

Basin. Each is visited periodically to monitor the well-being of their exceptional or unusual resources.

Continued management effort has been made in the Whitehorse Basin where the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout are resident in several streams. Three consecutive years of rest from grazing of the higher elevations has enabled a good recovery trend on many streams. Cattle use was again allowed in the eastern mountain pasture in accordance with the Whitehorse Butte Allotment Management Plan. Low water flow due to the recent drought years was resolved by a good snow pack and summer discharges approaching more normal levels.

Research Natural Area

Jordan Craters lava flow is the only Research Natural Area (RNA) within the Jordan Resource Area. The vegetation of the two kipukas within the Jordan Craters lavas has

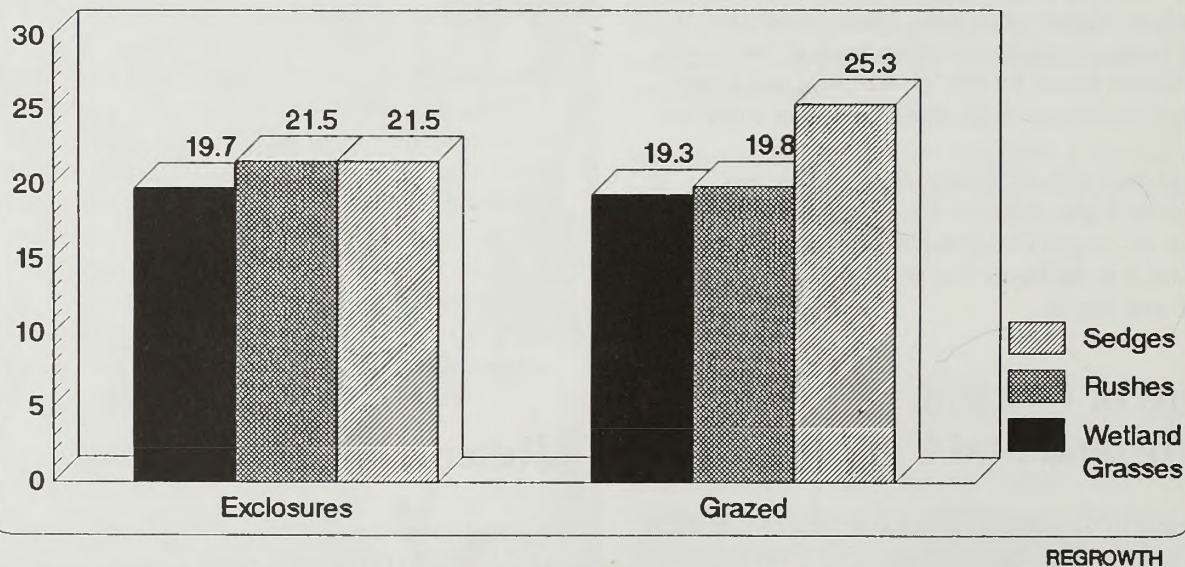


Kipuka surrounded by a lava flow in the Jordan Craters Research Natural Area.

been studied periodically since 1978. Kipukas are relict areas of original land (islands) surrounded by a sea of lava. Information from these sites can be used to compare with similar areas where various land uses occur. While vegetation is considered pristine in that modern man or livestock have not influenced the site, numerous cottontail rabbits and occasional mule deer use the plants.

The effect of the past drought conditions is apparent at these natural sites. A return to more moist weather during 1993 enabled a flourish of wild flowers and grass growth.

Riparian Vegetation Growth Willow Creek – Vale District Average Height (inches) 6 July 1993



In an area grazed from mid-March through April, growth of wetland non-woody vegetation was nearly identical to that in adjacent livestock exclosures in early July.

Wildlife

The easing of drought conditions has been beneficial for all wildlife. A heavy and persistent snow pack last winter caused some loss of individual animals, with chukar and deer seeming to be especially hard hit. Excellent plant growth and more widespread availability of drinking water should enable a rapid recovery of all wildlife numbers.

Production of plants increased dramatically compared to the drought years. Browse shrubs such as bitterbrush or buckbrush that afford high nutrition to browsing animals (e.g., mule deer, during the fall and winter) produced near record growth.

Riparian habitat improvement, through management, has been a major thrust within the Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountains area near McDermitt. Through agreement with the livestock operators, one of the area's high elevation pastures has now received its second season of cattle use following three years of non-use. An intense monitoring effort occurred throughout the livestock use period. Later in the summer, detailed studies were again conducted, and good results reported.

Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

The Trout Creek Working Group again conducted field tours, with tour participants including biologists from the threatened and endangered species program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Of particular interest on these tours was the Lahontan cutthroat trout, a federal threatened species, which is found in several major streams.

Kit fox census work was accomplished in the Whitehorse Desert by biologists employed with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. As was the case for the past several years, fox were found sparsely scattered within suitable habitat areas.



Mule Deer head for the protection of the canyons during the winter.

Wild Horses

As for other management programs, the above normal precipitation in 1993 was beneficial to the Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (HMAs). For example, past



Wild horse removal operation for resource management and adoption.

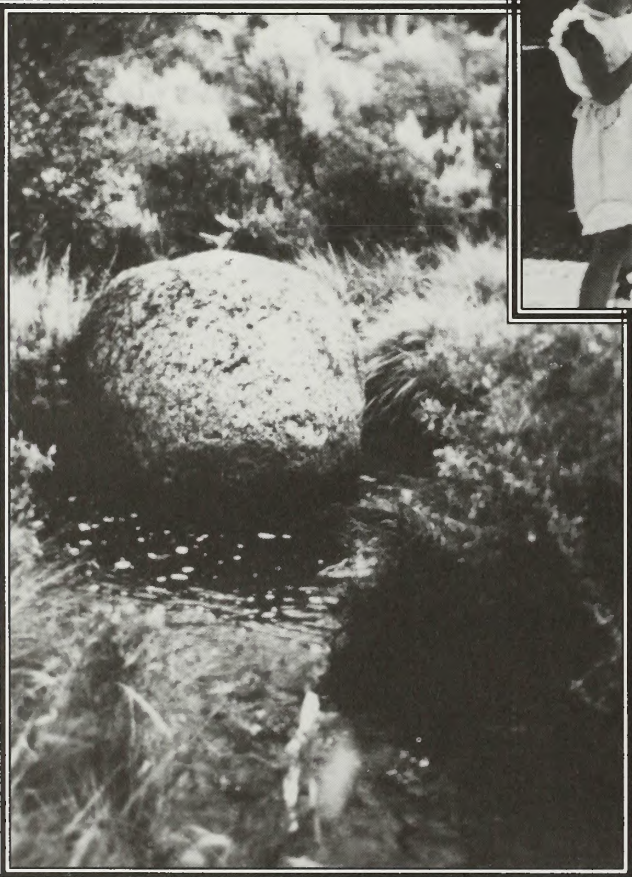
frequent monitoring of the horses to ensure they had adequate forage and water was not needed. The horses fared very well in 1993, dispersing to most of the herd areas during this wet and cool year.

The Wild Horse Program developed and established monitoring studies in all the HMAs to determine whether a thriving and ecological balance of the resources can be maintained. This effort will allow identification of those areas where wild horse use is not meeting objectives. In the past, it was difficult to distinguish between the impacts of wild horse use and livestock use.

No wild horse gatherings were done in 1993 because conditions did not warrant reductions in wild horse numbers.

Soils and Watershed

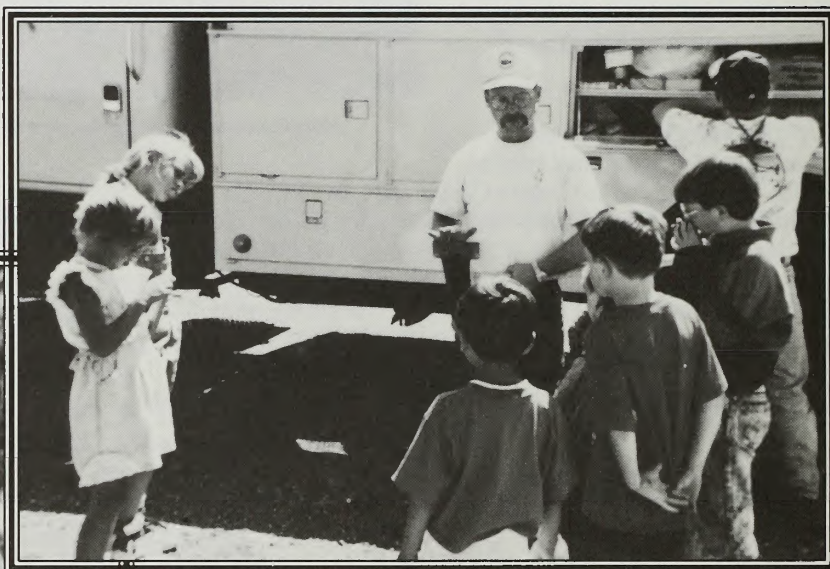
Riparian habitat management and monitoring continued to be a major initiative within the Soil and Watershed Program. The majority of work was within



Riparian habitat management in the Trout Creek Mountains.

the Oregon Canyon-Trout Creek Mountains, although monitoring also continued on Bogus Creek and lakes where water returned in early June.

Some loss of native grasses and crested wheatgrass has been noted as a result of the prolonged dry period, but overall this year's growing season had ample enough moisture to enable some recovery. Bunchgrass plants are typically smaller in size following several years of stress from drought; some of the larger plants had died. There was a large number of seedlings, especially crested wheatgrass, and these are filling the interspaces between other plants.



Fire prevention instruction is a big part of every firefighter's job.

Fire Management

The 1993 fire season brought a "fire-free" summer to the Jordan Resource Area. Unusually large amounts of precipitation during spring and early summer, in contrast to recent drought years, minimized fire potential and resulted in zero fires recorded in the resource area. While fuels were abundant, the wet season and moderate temperatures kept the threat of fire very low.

BLM firefighters assigned to the Jordan Resource Area live and work out of the Jordan Valley and Burns Junction Fire Stations. These facilities house about 15 firefighters. When not fighting fire, these personnel help resource

specialists with special projects. This year, the firefighters worked approximately 900 hours providing fence construction, cattle guard repair, weed control, and recreation site maintenance.

Fire management personnel also worked on updating the Vale District Fire Management Plan which provides guidelines for fire activities within the resource area.

1994 Program Initiatives

Cultural Resources

Priority undertakings for the Cultural Resource program will be the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River and the Birch Creek Ranch. Site patrol and monitoring along the lower segment of the river will continue as mandated by the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River Plan, and archeological sites along other segments of the river will be recorded. A draft management plan for Birch Creek Ranch will be stated during 1994.

Work planned for Trails West, a cultural heritage initiative, include a "rough-out" for a traveling educational and interpretive exhibit. The exhibit will show some wagon

road routes in the Jordan Resource Area. Also included in the exhibit will be artifacts found along the routes such as hand-forged horseshoes, bottle fragments, old style tin cans, and telegraph insulators.

Cultural Resource Program support to the range, recreation, and realty programs is expected to remain constant, following the 1993 decrease.

Range Management

The Range Management Program will continue to emphasize cooperative management in 1994 through coordination efforts with other activities and public land users. Use supervision, and monitoring of "I" and "M" allotments will receive the most emphasis. The Trout Creek area will continue to receive the most use supervision work as in 1993. Project work will be very limited in 1994 due to funding constraints. Any available funding for range improvements will be concentrated on reconstruction and completion of projects in the Trout Creek area.

Eight allotments are scheduled for evaluations in 1994: Willow Creek, Barren Valley, East Cow Creek, Gilbert, Big Horn (formerly Raburn), McCormick, Arock and Eiguren. The first five allotments listed are 1993 carry-overs. Four allotments are scheduled for evaluations in 1995: Antelope, Sheepheads, Louse Canyon and Zimmerman. Evaluation meetings are scheduled between January and April, and evaluation documents are expected to be completed by summer. If you have any interest in the allotment evaluation process, or information you believe will help in the evaluation of these or other allotments, please advice the Area Manager.

Allotment planning efforts will be emphasized during 1994. The 15-Mile Common Allotment Environmental Assessment (EA) and the McCormick Allotment EA, originally scheduled for 1993, will be developed to analyze grazing options for enhancing resource conditions. A draft AMP on the Zimmerman Allotment is completed, but document



Many seedings responded well to the renewed moisture in 1993.

finalization is in negotiation. Final AMP revisions planned for the Antelope and West Cow Creek Allotments in 1993 are also awaiting resolution. All of these documents are expected to be finalized in 1994.

As of the end of 1993, due to a dry Fall, there was still concern about drought effects on the rangeland. Grazing adjustments will be considered if these dry conditions continue and there is a lack of water and/or forage. Coordination with grazing permittees will be emphasized to minimize impacts to the environment, as well as to permittee operations. Good cooperation and understanding is anticipated from the livestock operators if conditions warrant some adjustments.

Recreation

The Final Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Main, West Little and North Fork Owyhee National Wild and Scenic Rivers was completed and distributed to the public at the beginning of FY94. Nine written protests were received on the plan and EA. The District Manager will respond to these protests and then establish an appeal period. Plan implementation will occur as soon as possible, consistent with appeal regulations.

Routine maintenance and patrols of recreation sites will continue. Emphasis will continue to be placed on the sites subject to highest use. Toilet installation is planned this fiscal year at Willow Creek Hot Springs and Three Forks recreation sites.

Interpretation and signing emphasis will continue in FY94. The new information panel for the Taylor Grazing Act Interpretive Site on Highway 95 will be installed. Brochures and fact sheets will be developed on recreation opportunities in the area.

The River Program will continue to emphasize resource monitoring and protection, visitor information and service, and canyon recreation opportunity inventory. Upgrading, consisting of additional poplar trees and railroad tie landscaping, is scheduled at the Rome Launch Site. Birch Creek Ranch projects include completion of the site-specific management plan, and continuing with routine and preservation maintenance to maintain its historic integrity.

Wilderness

Interim management of WSAs will continue to be the highest priority in the Wilderness Program. Congress has not yet acted upon BLM's wilderness recommendations for Oregon, and no other legislation has been introduced for wilderness proposals in Oregon.



Backpackers head down the North Fork of the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River during the early fall.

Ground and aerial monitoring, and signing of WSA boundaries, will continue during the field season. Baseline data collection and monitoring within the Owyhee River Canyon will continue as a priority during the river use season. A list of WSA rehabilitation projects, including removal of a garbage dump and man-made structure, is anticipated for completion in 1994. As much rehabilitation work as possible will be performed in the WSAs. The Intermountain Wilderness Area Ecosystem Study (IWAES), which is part of the U.S. Global Change Research Program, should get underway in the Jordan Craters WSA. The hydrology/limnology



Head of Oregon Creek Canyon WSA in the Trout Creek Mountains.

and vegetation monitoring will most likely be initiated this spring and summer.

Other work programmed for the Jordan Resource Area includes preparation of brochures and fact sheets about wilderness study areas to provide more information to the public.

Minerals

Applications will be processed for mineral materials associated with the maintenance of Malheur and Harney County roads, Oregon State Highways, Jordan Valley Irrigation District, and BLM roads. Among other minerals activity will be processing Notices of Intent for mining claims; conducting surface management enforcement inspections at about the same level as previous years; and meeting public demand for flat rock, and sand and gravel products. The resource area also plans to inspect and post signs at community mineral material site pits.

Lands and Rights-of-Way

The Eiquren Land Exchange totalling 1,245 acres is proposed for completion in 1994. The exchange provides federal lands for a similar acreage of private lands which

have notable wildlife values. There are two 1994 exchange proposals involving the acquisition of private lands within an area under wilderness review, in exchange for public lands not under wilderness review. Two additional land exchange proposals are also being considered.

Realty staff will continue with rights-of-way processing for utility lines and short-term agricultural permits. Ten short-term agricultural permits will be renewed. Authorization for two new one-year leases for the existing McDermitt Landfill will be completed. The McDermitt Landfill is scheduled for closure in the fall of 1994 in accordance with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Guidelines. Also, efforts toward completing

unauthorized use cases within the Jordan Resource Area is a priority in 1994.

Work will commence in 1994 on an amendment to the Southern Malheur Management Framework Plan. The amendment will identify parcels that can be disposed through direct public sale. Proceeds from the land sale will help offset any past and future BLM land acquisitions, and also contribute towards maintaining a stable county tax base.

Hazardous Materials

In the future there will be increased overview and coordination with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on mining activities in the Jordan Resource Area. Future endeavors will involve responding to illegal or "midnight dumps" and hazardous material incidents. In coordination with other resource programs, the hazardous material specialist will continue with inventory plans for identifying potential hazardous materials sites/situations.

The hazardous materials program will provide guidance and assistance to the Realty Program on the closure of the McDermitt Landfill.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Regular monitoring of ACECs is planned during 1994 to ensure that management is in accordance with identified standards.

A management plan and environmental analysis for the Saddle Butte ACEC will be completed and implemented.

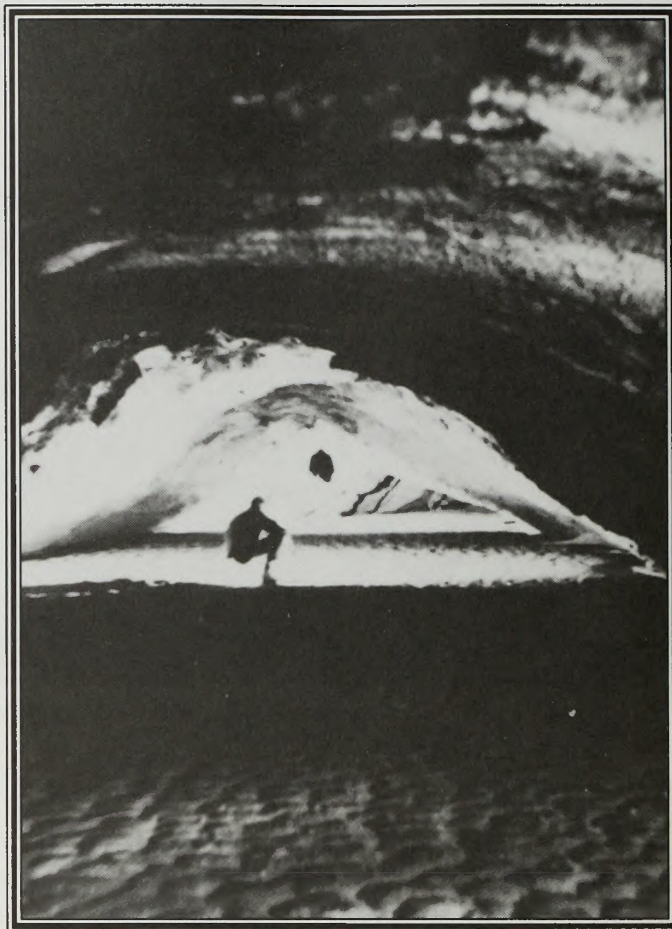
Monitoring is expected to continue within the Whitehorse ACEC.

Research Natural Area

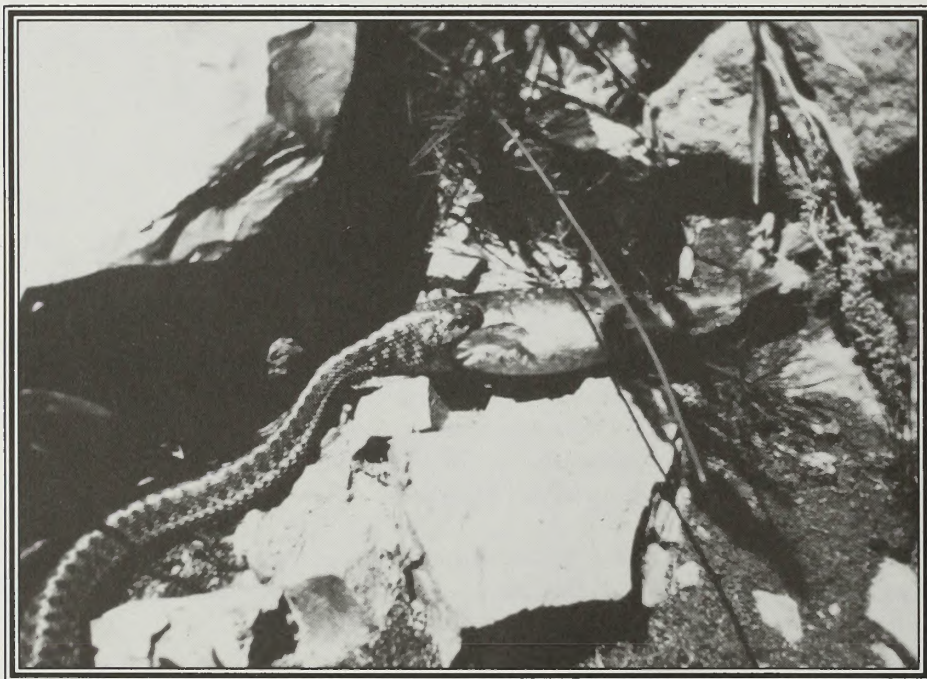
Monitoring and research for plant and wildlife resources of the Jordan Craters Research Natural Area will continue. Special emphasis will be placed on riparian habitat recovery from drought.

Wildlife

During 1994, emphasis will continue in riparian habitat management and monitoring, with special attention directed on the effects of renewed cattle grazing on portions of the Oregon Canyon-Trout Creek Mountain



The Saddle Butte lava tubes where the primary uses are scientific research and wildlife habitat.



Bull snake lunches on a fat sucker fish.

rangelands. The objective in this area is to continue the efforts of many people over several years to develop a grazing system which will enable continued recovery of the riparian ecosystem.

Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

Several sensitive plants will be observed and studied during the coming field season to monitor their status in growth and reproduction. Plant inventories will be completed for all proposed development activities that involve ground disturbance.



Bighorn sheep, once eliminated from Oregon, are now a viable population.

Soils and Watershed

Additional aerial color photography is planned for several streams not previously photographed. Pictures will also be taken of sites of interest along the main Owyhee River to establish baseline data for future change determination.

Fire Management

Fire management personnel plan to complete the updating of the Vale District Fire Management Activity Plan to provide the latest in fire management techniques and procedures. The fire station at Jordan Valley will house two

Continuing goals for the sensitive animal species program include monitoring Lahontan cutthroat trout habitat, and conducting field studies for the kit fox and Townsend's big-eared bat. BLM will provide close cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a recovery plan for the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout.

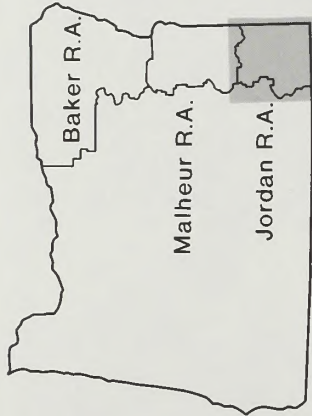
engine crews (one heavy and one light); Burns Junction Fire Station will have three engine crews (two heavy and one light). The crews' primary duty continues to be suppression of wildfire and human-caused fire. As in the past, however, as their workload allows, the crews will also assist the resource areas with seasonal maintenance and construction tasks.

Wild Horses

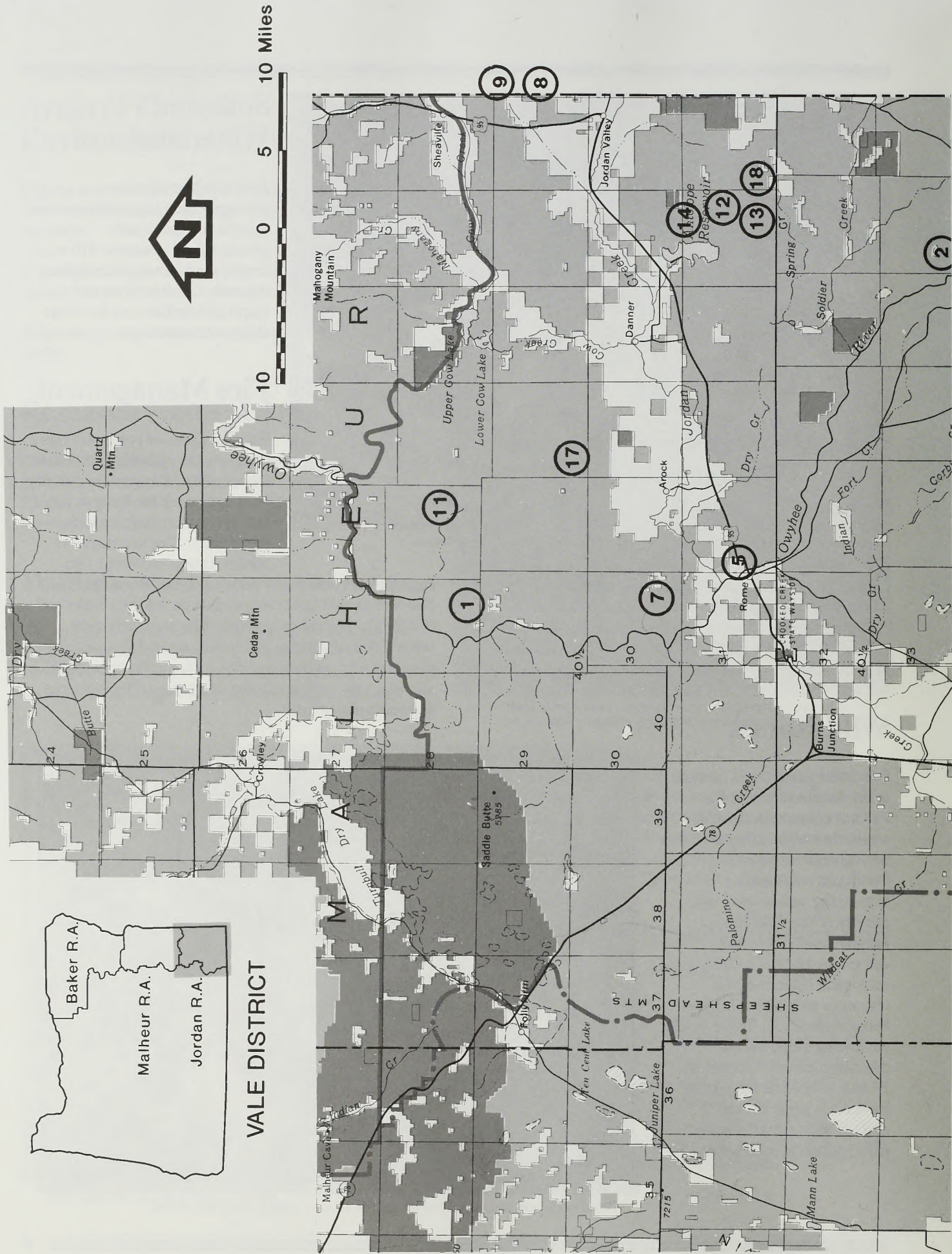
One horse gathering is planned in the Sheepheads HMA in FY94 if conditions warrant, at which time a gathering plan will be available for comment. Continued emphasis on monitoring will be the major priority of the Wild Horse Program in FY94 to help determine whether a thriving ecological balance of the resources within the HMAs is being maintained. There will be continuing emphasis on educating the public about the BLM's wild horse management, by making presentations at schools and by encouraging participation in adoptions.



Wild horses can reach speeds of 40 mph on an open stretch across the desert.



VALE DISTRICT





LEGEND

- - - District Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary
- BLM Lands
- State Lands
- Private Lands

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

VALE DISTRICT

Jordan Resource Area

Proposed 1994 Project

1994

4

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REGISTER

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an environmental analysis concerning the potential effects of any on-the-ground action before its approval. NEPA also requires that the analyses be open to the public.

During fiscal year 1994, the Jordan Resource Area will analyze several on-the-ground actions which may occur this year or in succeeding years. The following register lists the environmental assessments (EAs) anticipated for completion in fiscal year 1994, along with other information, to facilitate public participation in the analysis process. In addition to this register notice, legal notices will be published in local newspapers whenever an EA becomes available for public review.

If you wish to review any of the EAs on the following list, please notify the Jordan Resource Area Planning and Environmental Coordinator in writing, including in your request the area register number and project name specific to the EA of interest.

Area Register Number	Project Name	Proposed Action	Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EA Completion Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
2	15 Mile Community Allotment	Develop new grazing system.	15 Mile Allotment	Trout Creek Riparian area	9/1994	9/1994
3	McCormick Allotment	Develop new grazing system.	McCormick Allotment	Trout Creek Riparian Area	9/1994	9/1994
4	Owyhee Butte Pipeline	Extend the well pipeline and install water troughs.	Arock Pasture, West Cow Creek Allotment	None	4/1994	4/1994
5	Bennett Spring #2 Development	Develop spring and fence riparian area.	Bennett North Pasture, East Cow Creek Allotment	None	9/1994	9/1994
6	Macaroni Springs Pipeline	Construct 1 mile of pipeline.	Little Whitehorse Pasture, Whitehorse Butte Allotment	Trout Creek Riparian Area	9/1994	9/1994
7	Dog Lake Cross Fence	Move existing fence to make three new pastures.	Dog Lake pasture, West Cow Creek Allotment	WSA-3-120, Jordan Craters RNA	6/1994	6/1994
8	Parsnip Spring	Develop spring with head box and trough.	Parsnip Beak, Willow Creek Allotment	None	6/1994	6/1994
9	Soldier Creek Pipeline Extension	Construct 1 mile of pipeline.	Sheep Spring, Wroten Allotment	None	7/1994	7/1994

APPENDIX A

1993 Completed Rangeland Improvements

Type	Units	Benefiting Activity
New reservoirs	1.0 each	Range/Riparian
Pipelines	1.5 miles	Range/Riparian
Fences(new/modification/removal)	8.0 miles	Range/Riparian
Fences maintained	5.0 miles	Riparian

1994 Carryover and Proposed Rangeland Improvements

Grey Spring Pipeline	1.5 miles	Range
Willow Reservoir Fence	0.25 miles	Range/Riparian
Basque Pipeline #2	7.0 miles	Range
Oliver Cross Fence	2.5 miles	Range

Allotment Management Plans Completed in 1993

None

Allotment Management Plans Proposed in 1994

Zimmerman

Allotment Management Plans Proposed for Revision in 1994

West Cow Creek AMP
Antelope AMP

Decisions or Agreements in 1993

The temporary shift of AUMs from the Mahogany Unit to Arock Allotment, made in 1980, to consolidate part of the Martin Andre grazing operation in one allotment was made permanent by implementing a Shift-of-Use decision.

Range Program Summary Maintenance

Planning document maintenance is an ongoing process. For example, changes to grazing systems, allotment boundaries, and number of pastures require documentation. The following are corrections or changes that have occurred since the 1986 RPS Update:

The Raburn Allotment (allotment number 11005) is now called the Big Horn Allotment. This change was made because the Raburn family no longer run livestock in the Raburn Allotment.

Allotment Evaluation

Coyote Lake Allotment (10804)

Concerns: Drought has affected forage production and water availability during the past 6 years. Need to maintain ecological balance with wild horses.

Recommendations: Look at opportunities for additional water development. Establish monitoring studies that will provide information on the impacts of horse use that can be separated from the impacts of livestock use.

Lodge Allotment (10901)

Concerns: Current grazing system is not meeting allotment objectives. Key forage plants decreasing and undesirable plants increasing as a result of drought and grazing. Too much concentration of livestock use around permanent waters.

Recommendations: Establish more reliable water sources in cooperation with permittee to distribute livestock grazing. Ensure the AMP grazing system is followed so that adequate growing season rest is allowed for both pastures. Ensure key plant needs are met during drought conditions. Re-evaluate the allotment in 10 years.

Oliver Allotment (10905)

Concerns: There are livestock/recreational conflicts at the Cow Lakes Campground during the summer months. Existing grazing system may not meet long-term needs for the resource and wildlife.

Recommendations: Construct a pasture division fence (identified in the last evaluation) to allow for the deferment of grazing use and the enhancement of resource conditions and wildlife habitat. Repair the fences around the Cow Lakes Campground to keep livestock out of the facility. Following the completion of the pasture division fence, develop a grazing system that will meet long-term objectives. Re-evaluate the allotment in 10 years.

West Cow Creek Allotment (20902)

Concerns: Drought conditions have caused key forage plants to lose vigor allowing undesirable plants to increase in some pastures. Livestock distribution as a result of the lack of permanent water is poor in some pastures. Existing AMP needs to be revised to reflect the breakup of the allotment into individual use areas.

Recommendations: Revise existing AMP. Explore opportunities for developing more permanent livestock waters. Improve vigor in key forage plants by ensuring adequate growing season rest. Change management category from an "M" to an "I". Re-evaluate the allotment in 5 years.

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
VALE DISTRICT OFFICE**

100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

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